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## **Request for Response**

### **Vessels to support Gulf of Maine Industry-Based Cod Survey**

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) is seeking bids from commercial otter trawl fishing vessels and otter trawl net builders for support in a pilot industry-based survey (IBS) designed for Gulf of Maine cod. The primary objective of the project is to survey aggregations of cod in time and space to describe cod distribution by stock demographic characteristics (age, structure, spawning, and variance) and develop an aggregation map. This survey of cod distribution is needed to monitor inshore cod stocks, assess the importance of these areas as nursery and spawning grounds, and to improve management decisions.

*MarineFisheries* looks to contract four vessels to conduct the survey. Two vessels shall be from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and one vessel each from the states of Maine and New Hampshire. The survey shall consist of approximately 10 sea days of net calibration (actual number of sea days needed for calibration may vary from boat to boat), and two 10 sea day sampling cruises. The location of the survey shall be in the Gulf of Maine waters from the shore out to approximately 60 fathom depth (including Cashes Ledge but not including Georges Bank). This survey shall be conducted within the area specified from 41°30' North latitude to the northern extreme of the Hague line. The investigation will be a random-stratified survey design with targeted adjustments to accommodate areas of particular concern to industry participants in localized areas. Each vessel will be outfitted with 1 to 2 standardized trawl nets, digital balance, sampling equipment and scientific personnel to quantify the catch. The sampling design is such that trawl vessels shall conduct thirty-minute tows at a speed of approximately three knots, attempting to average 5 tows per day. There shall be approximately 200 stations over the two time periods for a total of 400 stations. Each boat will cover approximately 50 stations over the 10 sea day survey. Eighty percent of the stations shall be inshore (8 days per vessel) and twenty percent (2 days per vessel) will be offshore. When bidding, one sea day will be considered 24 hours, but in reality could be less than that depending on steam time between sample stations, speed of vessel, presence/absence of fixed gear at the station, bottom type, weather conditions, etc.

*MarineFisheries* also looks to contract one net designer/manufacturer, located within the survey region, to build six identical otter trawl nets. The net design has been chosen through a series of meetings and discussions by participating net builders, industry, and State/Federal

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*David M. Peter, Commissioner*

government representatives. It is expected that because many of the sample sites will be over unknown bottom structure, it is possible that significant damage to the net(s) could occur during survey cruises. If damage occurs, the net(s) shall be delivered immediately to the contracted net designer/manufacturer bidder and repaired in a timely manner to avoid delay of the completion of the survey. Following net calibration and prior to each cruise, all nets will be measured by the contracted net designer/manufacturer bidder and if any stretching and/or wear is evident, the net will be restored to the original dimensions.

The time schedule for the development and implementation of the project and survey is as follows:

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April – May:	Solicit vessels and net manufacturer/designer
May 7:	Begin accepting responses
May 21:	Deadline for responses
May 30:	Vessels and net designers/manufacturers selected and notified
August 1:	Standardize trawl at flume tank
August 31:	Deadline for completion of construction of 6 trawl nets
September 1:	Begin calibration tows (10 sea days/vessel)
Mid Nov-Dec.:	First survey begins (10 sea days/vessel)
Jan-early March:	Second survey begins (10 sea days/vessel)

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Request for Response (RFR) information and project specifics will be made available through this website by May 7, 2003. Bids will be accepted May 7, 2003 through May 21, 2003. If you have any questions please contact Bill Hoffman at (978) 282-0308 ext. 106 or e-mail at [Bill.Hoffman@state.ma.us](mailto:Bill.Hoffman@state.ma.us).